

REMARKS

Applicants request favorable reconsideration and allowance of the subject application.

Claims 10 and 11 are pending. Both claims are independent.

By this amendment, claims 10 and 11 have been amended, and claims 1-9 and 12-18 have been canceled without prejudice or disclaimer. Support for the amendments may be found in the application, as originally filed. No new matter has been added.

Applicant notes that claims 10 and 11 have been indicated as containing allowable subject matter, and would be allowed if rewritten in independent form. In keeping with this indication of allowable subject matter, claims 10 and 11 have been rewritten in independent form, and consequently, claims 10 and 11 are submitted to be in condition for allowance.

The Office Action entered rejections of claims 1-5, 7, 9, and 15 under 35 U.S.C. § 103, alleging those claims to be unpatentable over the combination of (i) one of U.S. Patent Nos. 5,690,406 (Furukawa et al.) and 5,831,674 (Ju et al.) and (ii) U.S. Patent No. 5,903,360 (Honma et al.). Additionally, claims 6 and 8 stand objected to under 35 U.S.C. § 103 as unpatentable over the combination of Furukawa et al. and Honma et al. As discussed above, however, claims 10 and 11 are seen to be in condition for allowance, and the remaining claims have been canceled. These actions have been taken without prejudice to or disclaimer of subject matter, and without conceding correctness of the rejection, but rather strictly to obtain an earlier allowance and to expedite issuance.

For the foregoing reasons, Applicant submits that this application is in condition for allowance. Favorable reconsideration and an early Notice of Allowance are requested.

Applicants' undersigned attorney may be reached in our Washington, D.C. office by telephone at (202) 530-1010. All correspondence should continue to be directed to our below listed address.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Michael J. Didas", is written over a horizontal line.

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